

News Release

U of M Crookston Horticulture Club to Host the Mid-America Collegiate Horticultural Society Annual Conference from Thursday, October 20 to Sunday, October 23, 2011

By Itollefs on Wednesday, October 5, 2011

The University of Minnesota Crookston Horticulture Club is hosting the Mid-America Collegiate Horticultural Society (MACHS) 39th annual conference. This event will be from Thursday, October 20 to Sunday, October 23, 2011, and the theme is "Little Campus on the Prairie." The MACHS conference is expected to bring more than 40 horticultural students from across the Midwest to the U of M Crookston campus. This is the first time that the U of M Crookston Horticulture Club has hosted this event.

MACHS is comprised of horticulture clubs from universities and two-year colleges in the Midwest Region including Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. MACHS is a branch of the Association of Collegiate Branches (ACB) within the American Society for Horticultural Sciences (ASHS). ACB is a national forum comprised of undergraduate horticulture clubs within ASHS.

The objective of MACHS is to promote an awareness of the profession of horticulture, furnish a medium of communication for horticulture students, and exchange club and professional ideas. These objectives are met through a variety of activities taking place throughout the weekend conference.

Thursday night students will gather in the U of M Crookston greenhouse classroom for registration, refreshments, and a campus welcome by Ron DelVechio, U of M Crookston professor and head of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department. Friday morning begins with a contest which includes a general knowledge exam, plant identification, and plant judging. Each school has a team of four students whose individual scores contribute to the team total. This contest is designed to challenge the horticulture students and allow them to see where they stand in relation to other universities.

Friday afternoon will include three guest speakers. Linda Kingery of the Northwest Regional and Sustainable Development Partnership will be talking to students about local foods. Kathleen Brokke, historian and horticulturalist, will be performing her interpretation of Fannie Manhood Heath, a pioneer horticulturalist in this region. Minnesota Nursery and Landscaping Association president Bert Swanson will also be sharing his industry perspective with the up and coming industry leaders. Friday evening will include a banquet meal with keynote speaker Rusty Schmidt, natural resource specialist with the Washing Conservation District. Schmidt is one of three authors of the Bluethumb Guide to Raingardens which has changed the way people think about using water in the Twin Cities area and beyond.

Saturday is a day of regional tours. Students will begin the day with naturalist Rhett Johnson leading the group through the Agassiz Dunes Scientific and Natural Area in Fertile, Minn. Traveling south to Detroit Lakes, Minn. the group will see the poinsettia growing operation of Bergen's Greenhouse, Inc. In Park Rapids, Minn. students will visit the wholesale perennial growing operation of Bergen's Nursery. The final stop for the group will be Itasca State Park where the group will take a tour of Minnesota's conifers. Students will also have an opportunity to cross the headwaters of the Mississippi River which will be a first-time experience for many students who come from much farther downriver.

Sunday marks the end of the weekend conference as the MACHS students hold their annual business meeting. Awards from Friday's team contest also will be presented. It will be a weekend of learning, networking, and growing as a horticulturalist for all students involved.

The entire event is being planned by the U of M, Crookston Horticulture Club students with support from U of M, Crookston staff and faculty. The MACHS annual conference is the largest undertaking in the history of the Horticulture Club, and they are excited to showcase their program, the campus, and the community to many other universities and technical colleges.

U of M Crookston senior Kristine Neu currently serves as the chair of MACHS, and she works with a team of four other officers from South Dakota State University; the University of Wisconsin, River Falls; and Iowa State University.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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